



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH &
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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International and National Mental Health Community Meets in Nashville

Integration of Health and Mental Health Care Focus of Meetings

Nashville— The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities hosted three mental health meetings this past week. One of the main topics of conversation at each of these meetings was the integration of mental health and primary health care services. Former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher was on hand to share his opinions and expertise to the almost 3000 attendees.

"I am honored that Tennessee was host to these meetings that are so important to the national and world mental health community," stated TDMHDD Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts. "It was such a great experience to have so many diverse people from different regions come together and discuss mental health policy and share their ideas on how to strengthen the all important public mental health systems."

The International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership gathered in Nashville July 10. This group is comprised of mental health leaders from the following nations: the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, Scotland, and England. Dr. Terry Cline, director of the U.S. Substance and Mental Health Services Administration, joined Commissioner Betts in welcoming the IIMHL executive board to the U.S.

The National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Summer meeting began July 13 and TDMHDD Commissioner Virginia Trotter Betts was re-elected President for a two-year term. Formerly Vice-President, she had served as President of NASMHPD since January, 2008 when President Carlos Brandenburg of Nevada retired.

The Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development 2008 Training Institutes officially kicked-off on July 17. Over 2500 mental health advocates attended to focus on the important work of developing systems of care for children and adolescents with mental health needs and their families. Tennessee currently has one system of care in place in Columbia, Tenn.-- the Mule Town Family Network.

These three meetings of significance were enhanced by their opportunity for overlap and significant interaction with one another, including the international leadership. A common theme among the three conferences was the integration of health and mental health care and the positive effects of such integration on the health of the population. The NASMHPD program included a Tennessee panel comprised of three mental health experts to share some of the most innovative ideas for mental health integration across the state.

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“Mental health is fundamental to overall health and well-being,” stated Commissioner Betts who participated in the development of two reports while working with Dr. Satcher at the U.S. Health and Human Services Administration--*Mental Health: a Report of the Surgeon General* and *the Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent Suicide*. “This is a message that grew out of our reports, and I think the message is more important than ever in today’s society. Forums such as these three provide an opportunity to shape mental health policy as well as assist in overcoming the stigma of mental illness. Tennessee was honored to serve as host.”

For more information on the conferences or additional mental health information please visit www.state.tn.us/mental.

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